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Trust Fund
Washington, D.C. 20408

From Archives U.S.

Mint of the U.S.
Philadelphia, Dec 2d 1837

Sir

An attempt was made here some time ago to put spurious coppers coins in circulation in Philadelphia and they were actually advertised for sale by one of our Merchants. The unlawful proceeding was, however, promptly put a stop to; and our District Attorney, Mr. Read, brought the matter before the Grand Jury of the U.S District Court who after attending to the representations made by Mr. Read and myself, made a presentment upon the subject, which was published in some of the Philadelphia papers.

I find that the same offence has been committed at Baltimore and that you have candid measures to be taken to arrest the evil there.

I now write for the purpose of calling your attention to the great extent to which, as I have reason to believe, spurious copper coins are circulated in New York. A gentleman has recently brought me from there ten different varieties, some of them such imitations of the legal coin that I think they might be brought under the law of March 3, 1835 against counterfeiting. All of this comes within the terms of the Act of May 8, 1792, Section 2.

The greater part of these spurious coins are evidently made at the same establishment as they have the same face or the same reverse.

Most of them are very light, some not exceeding three quarters the weight of the cent for which they are passed. The circulation of some of these spurious coppers may be easily found, since they have had their addresses marked on the reverse of the coins. — One is Ezra B. Sweet, No. 200 Canal Street, N.Y. — Another is Smith Clock Establishment No 74 Bowery, N.Y. — Another is Robinson, Jones & Co — Another New York Joint Stock Exchange Company, No 6 Tontine Building, Wall St

I have just had brought to me the New York Observer of this day in which is the following Statement

"Immense numbers of spurious Cents are in circulation in this city, the Journal of Commerce says they are generally light and "sold by the hundred at 62 cents a hundred and that the market women make a regular business of buying light cents and passing them off in place of real cents." The Emancipator of the last week advertises a new emission, "similar in appearance to new cents — nearly as heavy and made of pure copper" for sale at the Anti Slavery Office in Nassau Street. They have anti Slavery devices on them"

I am told that — Spurious copper coins are largely in circulation in Boston, but I have no exact information on this point

the coinage of copper is the only operation of the Mint by which any profit is made; and if this illegal interference with our functions is arrested the profit will be so considerable as very appreciably to reduce the expenses of the establishment

I am sir my resp
R. M. P
Dir

To Hon Levi Woodbury
Sec of Treasy

Dr.
(Robert M. Patterson)

Robert M Patterson (Mint Director) to Treas Secy Woodbury
Dec 2, 1837

Dec 4, 1837 Woodbury to R. M Patterson

Dec 6, 1837 Patterson to Woodbury

June 26, 1844 Patterson to Crocker Brothers

July 11, 1844 Crocker Bros to Woodbury with enclosure of letter from R & W Robinson dated July 4, 1844

NY Observer of Dec 2, 1837

Emancipator

From Archives of U.S.

Mint of the U. S.
Philadelphia, Dec 2d 1837

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The greater part of these spurious coins are evidently made at the same establishment as they have the same face or the same reverse.

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To Hon Levi Woodbury
Sec of Treasy

Dr.
(Robert M. Patterson)

Mint of the U. S.
Philadelphia, Dec 2d 1837

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I am told that spurious copper coins are largely in circulation in Boston, but I have no exact information on this point

I was informed that Ostheimer had brought his lawyer and a metallurgist to Atlanta to hear my talk. Ostheimer and Werner must have disclosed to some extent what my opinion was going to be. The talk was the last of four presentations and when my turn came the seats were all filled and people were standing and sitting in the aisles, some dealers having temporarily closed their bourse tables to be present. The talk also included an unequivocal opinion that the normally recognized 1804 dollars [redacted] and their dies were not made in 1804. After the talk I was asked by Ostheimer to attend a breakfast the next morning to hear and discuss the thoughts of other numismatists. At that breakfast there was a lively commentary by others while I just listened. I was told at the conclusion that suit would be filed against me. Since the news media thrives on controversy there was a quick publication of the written version of my talk by those who published Ostheimer's article.

Nine years after his purchase Ostheimer wrote Werner a letter dated August 7, 1970 that Werner should refund the money and take back the coins. Ostheimer said that Werner "led us to believe that they were bonafide pieces." Thus it appears that the installment payments due after the date of the talk had been completed. The return and refund never took place and those coins remained in the Ostheimer collection until most of the primary collection (but not the altered dollars) were sold at the August 9, 1975 auction of Superior Stamp and Coin Co., Inc. Some of the Ostheimer collection (including the altered dollars) was sold to an undisclosed client of Superior about that time and remains in private ownership. Werner had never guaranteed authenticity and had shared with Ostheimer the facts which Werner knew. [redacted]

The purpose of much of this detail is to emphasize the importance of guarantees of authenticity; the danger of relying on testing results of numismatically inexperienced people; the risk of reliance on opinions of people who have a conflict of interest; the frequency of encountering fence sitters who do not wish to become involved; the frequency of opinions being changed; and the reappearance of non-genuine coins.

the coinage of copper as the only operation of the Mint by which any profit is made; and of this illegal interference with our functions is arrested the profit will be so considerable as very appreciably to reduce the expenses of the establishment

I am sir my resp
R. M. P
Dir

To Hon Lew Woodbury
Sec of Treasy

Dr.
(Robert M. Patterson)

the option was exercised on or about June 20, 1961 and Werner wrote on that date to the Ostheimers saying: "I am just as pleased in selling you the 1804-1805 as you were in purchasing them. I am sure the coins will bring to you, besides the monetary rewards, a reward & satisfaction of ownership and the happiness that your collection contains the only known genuine coins."

#

By this time Ostheimer had written and had published in the various numismatic media previously refered to his detailed articles asserting

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the authenticity of the coins. After I had read the articles, I determined either to become convinced of or to condemn the findings but not to stay in limbo. After extensive study of the photographs which Ostheimer had been cooperative enough to send to me I concluded that the coins were alterations and asked him for permission to examine them. When I went to Philadelphia for that purpose he showed the coins to me and asked for my opinion. I told him the pieces were definitely alterations and that Bolender had written to me on July 12, 1961 changing his prior written opinions and now agreed with me. In the course of that conversation I mentioned the superb alterations of early U.S. cents made by the alleged "Smith of Ann Street." Werner was promptly told what I had said and wrote letters to Abe Kosoff, George Fuld and Art Kagin urgently requesting information about Smith of Ann Street and his work, never mentioning the 1804 or 1805 dollars. Werner offered to pay any expenses in obtaining that data. The replies are truly classic — Kosoff suggested asking John J. Pittman; Fuld suggested asking Walter Breen; and Paul Kagin suggested asking Eric P. Newman. That really was passing the buck — and I am not referring to either the 1804 or 1805 buck.

Mint of the United States
June 26th 1844

Gentlemen:

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st inst in which you state in reply to mine of the 18th that you will make & furnish us with the planchels we may need, made from copper of the United States Mines, at the same price & on the same terms as heretofore

The President has himself communicated to me his desire that for the encouragement of our own mines and the credit of circulating copper of our own country, I should, if practicable, procure for the mint planchets of United States copper. I therefore gladly take advantage of your offer and have to request that the copper furnished by you to the Mint, thence forward, be from the Mines in the United States.

The following paragraph has been going the rounds of the newspapers lately

"We are stated that counterfeit pennies worth sixty-two cents per hundred are made by the thousand, in Attleborough, Mass. They may be detected by comparison with the genuine coin. Half the cents in circulation are the Massachusetts issue."

Can you explain to me the origin of this rumor.

Very Respectfully
Your faithful Servant
R. M. P.

To
[redacted]
Messrs Crocker Bros & Co
Taunton, Mass.

Attleborough July 4, 1844

Messrs Crocker Bros. & Co

[redacted] Gentn

Yours of the 1st, is received - in reply we would say that we do not know of any cents being made in Attleborough nor can we account for the Paragraph which we have noticed in the papers.

We struck Shop cards in ~~1839~~ 1839 from Blanks which we purchased of you, but they did not represent a cent at all.

At the time of the Suspension of the Banks we saw some Blanks which were struck in Waterbury, Conn to represent a cent with these words Not one cent for Tribute But Millions for defence. That is the most we know about counterfeit Pennies

Yours respectfully

R & W. Robinson

Pr A. H. Draper

Crocker Bros was in Taunton, Mass as shown by notation on back of letter

~~the above~~ date to be 1839

~~Issued in~~ 1837.

suspension means 1837

From
Asst. Cashier, Bun. & Co
Taunton, Mass.
July 11/64.

Rec. 13th.

Wm. M. Patterson Esq
U. S. Mint
Philadelphia

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Taunton July 11. 1874.

R. M. Patterson Esq.
Director U.S. Mint
Dear Sir.

We duly received
Yrs favor of the 20th ult. & on
receipt we addressed a letter to
Messrs R. & W. Robinson, respectable manu-
facturers of Buttons &c, respecting
the paragraph in the Newspapers You
allude to.

We annex copy of their reply.
Our previous opinion that there was
no truth in the statement, requires
confirmation from the annexed letter.

Very Respectfully
Your Obt. Servt.

Elisha Rich Bro. & Co

Attleborough, July 31. 1841

Mess Cooke, Fox & Co

Gents

Yours of the 1st inst, is received, in reply to mine I say that we do not know of any cents being made in Attleborough nor can we account for the Paragraph which we have noticed in the papers,

Mr Hatch sold some Shop cards in 1839 from Blanks which he purchased of you, but they did not represent a cent at all

At the time of the Suspension of the Banks we saw some Blanks which were struck in Waterbury, Conn to represent a cent with these words Not one cent for Tribute But Millions for defence. That is the most we know about counterfeiting Pennies

Your Respectfully

R & N Robinson

per A. A. Draper

Sr/

Rem. Cocks, Bur., & Co.

Saunders, & Webb.

June 26/45.

Mint of the United States
June 26th 1844.

Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st. inst. in which you state, in reply to mine of the 18th. "that you will make arrangements with the planchets we may need, made from Copper of the United States Mines, at the same price and on the same terms as heretofore".

The President has himself communicated to me his desire, that for the encouragement of our own mines, and the credit of circulating copper of our own country, I should, if practicable, procure for the Mint, planchets of United States copper. I therefore gladly take advantage of your offer and have to request that the copper furnished us by you to the Mint, hereafter, be from the Mines in the United States.

The following paragraph has been going the rounds of the newspapers lately;

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"It is stated that counterfeit pennies, worth sixty two cents per hundred, are made by the thousand, in Attleborough, Mass. They may be detected by comparison with the genuine coin. Half the cents in circulation are the Massachusetts issue!"

Can you explain to me the origin of this rumor?

Very respectfully
Your faithful servant.
A. M. L.

To
, Mass. Boston, Brockway & Co
Taunton, Mass.

Sec. of Treasury

Dec. 21. '37.

December 1837

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Mint of the U. S.

Philadelphia, Dec. 2d, 1857.

Sir,

An attempt was made, some time ago, to put Spurious Copper Coins in circulation in Philadelphia; and they were actually advertised for sale by one of our Merchants. The unlawful proceeding was, however, promptly put a stop to, by the interference of our District Attorney, Atty. Read, who brought the matter before the Grand Jury of the U. S. District Court, who, after receiving attending to the representations made by Atty. Read and myself, made a presentment upon the subject, which was published in some of the Philadelphia papers.

I find that the same Spurious Coin has been committed at Baltimore, and that you have caused measures to be taken to arrest the evil there.

I now write for the purpose of calling your attention to the great extent to which, as I have reason to believe, the Spurious Copper Coins are circulated at New York. A gentleman has recently brought to me from there ten different varieties, some of them such imitations of the legal coin that I think they

might be brought under the law of March 3d, 1835, against counterfeiting. All of them come within the terms of the act of May 8th, 1792, Sect. 2.

The greater part of these Specimens contain an authority made at the same establishment, as they have the same face of the same device.

Most of them are very light, some not exceeding three-quarters of the weight of the cent, for which they are passed.

The ~~offenders~~ circulators of some of these Specimen Cents may be easily found, since they have had their address marked on the heads of the cents. — One is Ezra B. Sweet, No. 207 ~~One is~~ Canal Street, N. Y. — another is Smith, Clock establishment, No. 7th Broadway, N. Y. — Another is Robinson, Jones & Co. — another, New York Joint Stock Exchange Company, clerk, Tontine Building, Wall St. —

There just have brought to me the New York Observer of this day, in which ~~it is stated that "Immense numbers of Specimen Cents are in circulation in that city.~~ The Sun is the following statement.

"Immense numbers of Specimen cents are in circulation in this city. The

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Journal of Commerce says that they are generally light, and "sold by the bushel at 62 cents a hundred, and that the market women make a system buying of boys light cents and "no cents" by the quantity at a discount, and passing them off in place of real cents." The Encouragement of the last week advertises a new invention, "similar in appearance to new cents — nearly as heavy, and made of pure copper" for sale at the Anti-Slavery office in Cornhill Street. They have anti-Slavery devices on them.

We can't tell that Specimen copper cents are also largely in circulation in Boston, but [illegible] no exact information on this point.

The coinage of copper is the only operation of the Mint by which any profit is made; and if this interference with our functions is resorted, the profit will be so considerable as may essentially to reduce the expenses of the establishment.

Very sincerely yours

R. M. Patterson

Hon. Levi Woodbury
Sec. of Treasury

Sam'l Sec. of Treasury.
Dec. 4. '57.
Rec'd 7th.

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Treasury Department
Dec. 4. 1837.

Sir

In reply to your communication dated the 2nd inst I am happy to state, that letters have been already addressed to the District Attorney at N. York on the subject of the issue of spurious copper Coins, and I shall cause a letter to be written to the District Attorney at Boston on the subject, to day.

I remain very Respy
Your Obed. Servt

Levi Woodbury
Sec. of the Treas.

Dr. R. M. Patterson
Director of the Mint
Philada.

Sec. of Treasury.

Dec. 5, 37.

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Mint — U. S.
Dec. 6th, 1837.

Sir,

I had the honor of writing to you on the 2d. inst., on the subject of the spurious copper coins issued at New York.
I have since received eleven new varieties from the same place, making twenty-two in all. Of these several contain addresses by which they may be identified, and the offenders known, - viz.
Henry Anderson, Chatham Square, N.Y.
H. Crossman, No 92 Chatham St.
S. Maycock & Co., City Hall Place.
Merchants Exchange, Wall street.
Abraham Riker, No. 131, Division Street.
The above coppers are from 16 to 32 grains lighter than the cent, and some of the other specimens are still more deficient in weight.
I have also received one spurious copper coin from Boston. It professes to be issued by Wm. H. Miller, Nos. 4 & 6 Faneuil Hall. It is but two grains lighter than the cent.

I am, Sir, very respectfully
Your ob't Servt.

The Hon. Levi Woodbury
Sec. of Treasury